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ABSTRACT

A study assessed the need for and nature of linking gerontology jobs and workers through aging employment clearinghouses. Questionnaires designed to determine the need for such clearinghouses in the region encompassing Arizona, Hawaii, Nevada, and the Pacific Basin were completed by the following persons/agencies involved in the field of aging: 117 employers, 49 employees, 18 linking operations, and 25 gerontology programs. When questioned concerning the usefulness of job/job seeker linking operations, a majority of each group surveyed felt that aging clearinghouses would be at least moderately useful. In response to items concerning the nature of effective linking operation, respondents suggested job placement counseling with consideration given to such variables important to aging field job seekers as salary range and geographic location. Tentative recommendations called for encouraging aging employment clearinghouses, for establishing a full-fledged clearinghouse in the region surveyed, and for incorporating into the operations of that particular clearinghouse those features found successful according to the study and to related literature. (MN)

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LINKING GERONTOLOGY JOBS AND WORKERS

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and

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A STUDY

of the need for and nature of

AGING EMPLOYMENT CLEARINGHOUSES

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Linking Gerontology Jobs and Workers

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STUDY

Purpose of the Study

Despite the great growth of the field of aging and the increasing numbers of qualified professionals and paraprofessionals, problems exist in bringing together qualified workers of all ages and suitable jobs in the field. The study explored such problems in Region IX (Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, and the Pacific Basin) and tried to ascertain the need for and nature of job/jobseeker linking operations (aging employment clearinghouses).

Design of the Study

Four questionnaires were sent to 255 employers in the aging field, 114 recent employees in the aging field, 76 job/jobseeker linking operations, and 70 postsecondary gerontology programs. Usable responses from 117 employers represented 46%, from 49 employees 43%, from 18 linking operations 24%, and from 25 gerontology programs 36%.

Findings on Need for Linking

"How useful would a job/jobseeker linking operation be?", asked of all groups except the linking operations, yielded a positive consensus: 76% of the gerontology programs, 73% of the employees, and 53% of the employers thought a linking operation would be at least moderately useful. Other questionnaire items, though divergent, tend to support the need for linking.

Findings on Linking Functions

Features of an effective linking operation are suggested by the responses to several questionnaire items and by a detailed report in the related literature. Job placement counseling seems indicated, with consideration given job variables important to aging field jobseekers.

Study Recommendations

Tentative recommendations suggest that aging employment clearinghouses be encouraged, including regional ones, that a full-fledged clearinghouse be established in Region IX, and that features found in the study and related literature be incorporated in clearinghouse operations.

Supplemental Information

Tabulated responses to six questionnaire items bear on the ethnicity, age, and sex of gerontology employees and students, gerontology education and work experience from various vantage points, and employees' future training plans in aging.

THE REGIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM

The Administration on Aging awarded a Regional Education and Training Program (RETP) contract for Federal Region IX to Western Gerontological Society (WGS) on July 1, 1980.

Now in its second and final year, RETP is working towards fostering a coordinated approach to education and training on a regional basis by promoting greater understanding and linkages among institutions of higher education, state and area agencies, and service providers.

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) with a membership reflective of the regional diversity performs the following major functions in the RETP:

- o Serves as a representative source of input to WGS and to project staff about education and training needs, resources, and related programs and activities in the region.
- o Provides a broad based sounding board to ensure project congruence with regional needs and training directions.
- o Members individually and collectively foster and strengthen the linkages between education and practitioners, which the project is designed to enhance, and lay the foundation for consortia building efforts.

THE TAC MEMBERSHIP IS COMPOSED OF THE FOLLOW NG PERSONS:

Jerry Cimmarusti	John McSweeney	E. Percil Stanford
Jean Clawson	Eva Platero	Donna L. Yee
Renji Goto	Wm. R. Pothier	Consultants
Shimeji Kanazawa	Jon Pynoos	Jane Arndorfer
Carmelo Lacayo	Michael Slattery	Frank Matthews
Janet Levy	Adele Somers	Cyr N. Miller
John McCarthy	Celina Somoza	Pat Sasaki

RETP PROJECT STAFF: Glenn B. McKibbin, Project Director
Marg Bartosek, Barbara Freda, Olive MacDonald, Daniel Sinick

WGS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Gloria H. Cavanaugh, San Francisco

WGS is working in close collaboration with the AoA Regional Office, San Francisco, California, to provide assistance in activities related to human resource management and work force development.

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Four research assistants contributed to various aspects of the study: Mary A. Scherer, Robin T. Sedman, Mable Simmons, and Carol F. Taylor. Their volunteer assistance, as well as that of the Technical Advisory Committee and the Consultants, is acknowledged with gratitude.

The staff of the Western Gerontological Society provided support services essential to the study. Meriting special mention is the administrative assistant to the Regional Education and Training Program, Olive M. MacDonald, who could always be counted on for superior services beyond the call of duty.

The study could not have been accomplished, finally, without the questionnaire responses from the four groups sampled: aging field employers, recent employees, job/jobseeker linking operations, and gerontology programs. All respondents are gratefully acknowledged for their basic contribution to the study.

PREFACE

The Western Gerontological Society is pleased to present this report on factors affecting the linking of jobs in gerontology and gerontological workers. The study and its findings have both practical and theoretical implications for the field of aging. The study's breadth is indicated by its concern with gerontological workers of all ages and with paraprofessionals as well as professionals. While by no means definitive, this exploratory investigation brings together pertinent data generated by questionnaires and relevant material from the gerontological literature. This study opens up strategies and issues for further exploration by practitioners, researchers, and educators.

LINKING GERONTOLOGY JOBS AND WORKERS

A Study of the Need for and Nature of Aging Employment Clearinghouses

Despite the great growth of the field of aging and the increasing numbers of qualified professionals and paraprofessionals, problems exist in bringing together qualified workers of all ages and suitable jobs in the field. To explore such problems in Region IX (Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, and the Pacific Basin) and means of overcoming them, the Western Gerontological Society conducted a study sponsored by the Regional Education and Training Program of the Administration on Aging.

Four questionnaires were sent to employers in the aging field (255), recent employees in the aging field (114), job/jobseeker linking operations (76), and postsecondary gerontology programs (70). Each sample was selected as representing the geography of Region IX and the variety of agencies and institutions in the region. Employers included State Units on Aging, Area Agencies on Aging, AAA service providers, nutrition projects, senior centers, homes for the aged, health services at home, community mental health centers, long-term care services, and convalescent hospitals, among others. Recent employees, defined as hired within the past 12 months, were reached through randomly selected employers. Linking operations or employment clearinghouses--not necessarily restricted to the aging field--included private employment agencies and executive search firms, state employment departments and CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) programs, and professional associations. Gerontology programs represented complete and partial curricula at different academic levels.

Usable responses from the four groups amounted to 46% (117) of the employers, 43% (49) of the employees, 24% (18) of the linking operations, and 36% (25) of the gerontology programs. The study's time constraints did not permit efforts to increase the response ratio or to compare respondents and nonrespondents. Also, some respondents did not answer all questionnaire items. As with all studies, therefore, caution must be exercised in extending possible inferences beyond the particular respondents. This report tries to exercise such caution.

The main body of the report examined the responses in relation to the study's two major objectives: to ascertain the need for aging employment clearinghouses, particularly in Re-

gion IX, and to delineate specific features and functions of such clearinghouses. Responses to questionnaire items related only tangentially to these objectives are presented in the Supplemental Information following the report proper. These items were included to gather information regarding the characteristics of aging field employees, the backgrounds sought by employers and brought by employees, and gerontology program offerings.

TABLE 1

HOW USEFUL WOULD A JOB/JOBSEEKER LINKING OPERATION BE?

	Employer Responses		Employee Responses		Gerontology Program Responses	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Not useful	15	13	2	4	2	8
Minimally useful	27	23	6	12	1	4
Moderately useful	31	26	8	16	6	24
Very useful	23	20	16	33	7	28
Extremely useful	8	7	12	24	6	24

Need for Linking

"How useful would a job/jobseeker linking operation be?" was asked of all groups except the linking operations themselves. The responses are shown in Table 1. With "Extremely useful" and "Very useful" combined, 57% of the recent employees who responded chose these options, as did 52% of the responding gerontology programs and 23% of the responding employers. Adding "Moderately useful" (and excluding "Minimally useful" and "Not useful") increases the percentages to 73 for employees, 76 for gerontology programs, and 53 for employers.

Other questionnaire items bear less directly on need and in some instances are interpretable either as pros or cons. All responses are reported in a manner to facilitate readers' interpretation of the study's findings. One of the more clear-cut sets of responses--shown in Table 2--was that of employees to the question,"What would have aided your job-seeking efforts?" "Job referral service" was marked by 41%, "Job information publication" by 39%, and "Job placement counseling" by 16%. The remaining options, "Belonging to organization on aging" (31%)

and "Other" (6%) were not relevant to need. (Note that percentages do not total 100 in items allowing more than one option to be chosen.) The value of job placement counseling is supported by a Center for Public Management (Note 2) report that recommended employment counseling services to jobseekers: "We have found that job applicants need more help in sorting out their options and organizing their job search, rather than just providing them with a list of job openings" (p. 10).

TABLE 2

WHAT WOULD HAVE AIDED YOUR JOB-SEEKING EFFORTS?

Responses of recent employees:	No.	%
Job referral service	20	41
Job placement counseling	8	16
Job information publication	19	39
Belonging to organization on aging	15	31
Other	3	6

Asked "How did you find your present job?" (Table 3), the bulk of the recent employees (51%) marked "Other," their specified responses mainly mentioning "Word of mouth" or personal contacts through friends. "Word of mouth" was not included as an option, so as to allow for more responses to the other options. Of the item options offered, 37% marked "Notice in publication," 12% "Public employment service," 2% "University service," and 0% "Private employment agency." Word of mouth or personal contacts, well known both theoretically and empirically as the way most people get their jobs, are reinforced in a report by Ketron (Note 3) that, for gerontology graduates, "the most common sources were personal contacts with the employer" (p. 2-20).

A related item, "What factors make it difficult to find suitable employment?," was phrased to elicit responses going beyond individual employees' job-seeking experiences. "Job availability" predominated as a response (73%), followed by "Inadequate salaries" (35%). "Educational requirements," perhaps a third perception of labor market realities, garnered 8%, as did "Other." "Lack of job information" (27%) seems an indicator of need for linking assistance, as does "Job availability" if interpreted as to some extent lack of knowledge thereof.

TABLE 3

HOW DID YOU FIND YOUR PRESENT JOB?

Responses of recent employees:	No.	%
Notice in publication	18	37
Public employment service	6	12
Private employment agency	0	0
University service	1	2
Other*	25	51

* Mainly word of mouth

Divergent indicators seem reflected by the employees' responses to "How long did your job search take?" On the one hand, 67% reported job search duration of only 0-3 months, 12% 4-6 months, and 2% 7-9 months. On the other hand, 10% required more than a year and 8% 10-12 months, a total of 18% requiring 10 months or more. Jobs found in a short time, moreover, are not necessarily most suitable in the long run.

Employers' responses to some items tend to minimize the need for organized linking of jobs and applicants. "Average time to hire qualified applicant" was reported as only 0-3 months by 75% of the employers and 4-6 months by 19%. None reported "More than 1 year" and only 1% reported either 7-9 months or 10-12 months. "Annual employee turnover rate" similarly yielded the largest percentages for the smallest figures: 68% for a turnover rate of 0-10% and 17% for turnover of 11-20%. Yet the remaining 12% reported turnover of at least 21%: 7% for 21-30%, 3% for 31-40%, and 2% for more than 40% turnover. An Administration on Aging (Note 1) report to Congress concluded that "the long standing problem of employment in organizations serving the elderly, under normal economic conditions, is turnover" (p. V-15).

Another employer item, "Job vacancies expected in next 3 years," again showed high percentages for low figures: 56% said 0-3 and 20% said 4-6. While 5% for 7-9 and 1% for 10-14 bear out that trend, 7% for "15 or more" could point in either direction. Only 5% of the employers, finally, chose "Lack of job referral service" for "What factors make recruitment and hiring difficult?" Instead, 45% chose "Lack of qualified applicants," 43% "Inadequate salaries," and 8% "Temporary nature of jobs." The term "qualified" was used to allow for more options, respondents thus being permitted to

interpret it as various combinations of education and experience. The "Other" responses offered by 19% did not fit into consistent categories of any size. Civil service requirements were mentioned, however, as in the Administration on Aging (Note 1) report, which said "in public agencies many employees are subject to civil service regulations where qualifications are not specific to aging" (p. V-17). As to inadequate salaries, the report had this to say: "Since neither established professional groups nor the field of gerontology have established standards for education programs with aging content, employers have difficulty in developing salary and wage guidelines matched with specialized expertise in aging" (p. V-17).

The responses of job/jobseeker linking operations (clearinghouses) do seem to suggest the need for organized linking, not necessarily by those operations. To "Number of aging field jobseekers served in 1980," 44% said "More than 60." Other percentages were 22 for 1-20 and 6 each for 41-60, 21-40, and none. To "Number of aging field job vacancies handled in 1980," 33% said "More than 60," while 28% said 1-20, 11% said none, and 6% each said 31-40 and 41-60. As to "Aging field job vacancies expected to be handled in next 3 years," 39% said "More than 90" and 11% said 61-90, while 17% each said none and 1-30 and 6% said 31-60.

Asked "What factors make job/jobseeker linking difficult?," 33% of the linking operations said "Lack of qualified applicants," 33% said "Inadequate salaries," and 17% "Temporary nature of jobs." Aside from these unresolved realities, 33% chose "Time required for linkages" and 39% offered "Other" factors such as civil service regulations, unnecessary requirements--and discrimination--by employers, excessive salary requirements by jobseekers, and jobseekers' inadequate knowledge of job opportunities and of interview techniques. An Administration on Aging (no date) report highlighted civil service regulations as a major barrier to effective linking of jobs and jobseekers.

As to inadequate salaries as a barrier, 67% of the linking operations reported the "Most common salary range of aging field job vacancies" to be below $15,000, with 39% reporting the salary range to be below $10,000. In the range from $20,000 to $24,999, no salaries were reported, while 17% reported the range from $15,000 to $19,999 and 17% the range from $25,000 and over. Some bimodality is to be expected when linking operations serve a wide gamut of jobs and jobseekers, from paraprofessional to administrative.

TABLE 4

PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE BY GERONTOLOGY PROGRAM

Responses of gerontology programs:	No.	%
Job vacancy notices	18	72
Graduate availability notices	5	20
Employer/student job fair	4	16
Student/graduate association	3	12
Other*	7	28

* Mainly personal contacts

Gerontology program responses also generally support the need for organized linking. "Placement assistance by gerontology program" (Table 4) showed 72% providing "Job vacancy notices," 20% "Graduate availability notices," 16% "Employer/student job fair," and 12% "Student/graduate association." The 28% who offered "Other" assistance mainly mentioned "personal contacts," one response specifying "potential employers." The Ketron (Note 3) report concluded that "the placement assistance that was available came informally on an ad hoc basis from professors and staff. This assistance tended to be useful in obtaining teaching or research positions, but was of little value in securing direct service employment" (p. 2-13). Again, "most jobs were obtained directly by students without assistance by the school" (p. 2-20).

That most program graduates obtained their own jobs is reflected by the 60% response of "Self-placements" to the item, "How gerontology graduates obtained jobs," 48% of the programs naming "Field work experience," 24% "University placement services," and 4% each "Professional associations" and "Employment agencies." In regard to field work experience or practicum, an Administration on Aging (Note 1) report found that "among current and former students who had practicums 51% felt it was influential in obtaining a job" (p. IV-29).

"Feedback from gerontology graduates," gathered formally or informally (36% of the programs conducted formal follow-up surveys), revealed that 44% of graduates were "Mainly employed in aging field," 40% "Mainly in Region IX," and that suitable jobs had been obtained by 32% and adequate salaries by 12%. The 44% finding is almost exactly the same

as the Ketron study finding, reported by the Administration on Aging (Note 1): of gerontology graduates employed, "45% were working in jobs relating to aging" (p. IV-26). As to relatedness of employment to the field of aging, Mangum and Rich (1980) found from their survey of one program's graduates that 53% were in "highly related" employment and 39% in "related" employment. Hartford (1980), reporting another survey of graduates, provided a detailed list of types of aging employment settings. Some relevant findings were also reported in a third survey of graduates, by Friedsam and Martin (1980).

Three items pertained to numbers of gerontology graduates and students. As to "Number of graduates of program since its inception," 28% said 1-20, 16% said 21-40, 4% said 41-60, 12% said 61-80, and 20% said "More than 80." For "Anticipated number of gerontology graduates per year for the next 3 years," 28% said 1-10, 20% each said 11-20 and 21-30, 4% said 31-40, and 8% said "More than 40." Finally, for "Number of current students concentrating in gerontology," 12% each said 1-10 and 11-20, 24% said 21-30, 20% said 31-40, and 32% said "More than 40."

Numbers of gerontology graduates have a bearing on need for a job/jobseeker linking operation, as do the other findings presented. Since some of the findings are not unambiguous, however, they leave room for interpretation. To assist in such interpretation, the findings are reviewed in the section headed Discussion.

Linking Functions

Only half a dozen questionnaire items pertain specifically to the study's second objective of ascertaining features and functions of an effective job/jobseeker linking operation. Responses to these items are supplemented by material from a highly relevant report by the Center for Public Management (Note 2).

Linking operations were asked for their "Methods of linking aging field jobs and jobseekers." "Employer/seeker job mart" was marked by 44%, "Ads or notices in publications" by 39%, and "Designated staff responsibility" by 33%, with 17% each marking "Radio and television" and "Other," the last category (of three responses) adding little to the picture. Employers, asked for "Recruitment methods used," predominantly (83%) marked "Published ads or announcements." "Aging network contacts" was marked by 40% and "Gerontology programs" by 12%, with 21% each marking "Employment agencies" and "Other," this last category emphasizing word of mouth

and civil service at local and state levels.

Three items presented under Need for Linking are also pertinent to Linking Functions. Shown in Table 2 are recent employees' choices as to "What would have aided your job-seeking efforts?" In addition to "Job referral service" as a general need, employees marked "Job information publication" and "Job placement counseling." Table 2 shows employees' responses to "How did you find your present job?" Aside from the 51% who marked "Other" (mainly word of mouth), the 37% stands out as an indication of the important role of notices in publications. "Placement assistance by gerontology program," shown in Table 4, points up publications and other procedures.

Two employee items can be related indirectly to linking functions, which might take into account variables significant to jobseekers. Asked "What personal factors restricted your job search?," 53% of the employees said "Geographic location" and 24% said "Salary requirement," only 6% marking "Urban vs. Rural," 2% "Transportation," and 14% "Other," more than half of these indicating no restrictions. Asked for "Key reason(s) you accepted your current job?," 65% chose "Relevant responsibilities," 55% "Type of organization," 35% "Career advancement," 22% "Supervisor/co-workers," and 22% "Other," where salary received multiple mention amounting to 8%.

The Center for Public Management (Note 2) report dealt directly with aging employment clearinghouses, more often called job/jobseeker linking operations in the present study --for greater ease of comprehension by most respondent groups. The report concluded with a delineation (pp. 10-11) of "design features of an aging employment clearinghouse." The features presented there seem pertinent here. Note that the report also used job bank as equivalent to employment clearinghouse.

- o New job openings are listed according to some universal index code structure
- o Filled or expired job offerings are deleted
- o A central, updated listing of all current and unfilled job offerings is maintained. This listing is copies and distributed to all users of the job bank.
- o Active outreach or job development by those designated to uncover job openings: actual and planned
- o Controls are frequently established, in the form of job bank control, to limit the number of excessive or wasteful referrals so as to maximize the utility of the service to both the job-seeker and employer

- o Referrals are made by especially trained placement personnel who are experienced in matching up candidates with job openings
- o Job-seekers interviewing and referring
- o Number and access of job order taking and referral
- o Outstationing of access to the "job bank book" in hardcopy, micro-fiche or on CRT screens to jobseekers or employment counsellors
- o Computer-aided person-job matching where listings of job openings are prepared for the job-seeker for her or his follow-through and referral
- o Inquiring of all job-seekers regarding the status of their current/past job or other job openings they are familiar with and we are not following up on
- o Building an infrastructure of key contacts among constituent agencies, past graduates and employees, etc., to obtain job listings
- o Developing referral patterns for job-seekers in other parts of the country
- o Charging a user fee for service to defray part of the cost of placement service, insofar as possible, for individual placement services

Discussion

Need for job/jobseeker linking operations, indicated by a good deal of this study's findings, is corroborated by related literature. An Administration on Aging (Note 1) report made a number of points pertinent to need. One example: "Neither employers nor those seeking employment are well aware of each other's needs and capabilities. The smallness of most agencies and organizations limits their ability to and interest in conducting widespread recruitment efforts" (p. V-18). Another example: "First-time graduates of career educational programs need more assistance in job placement than more experienced personnel" (p. V-18).

Mangum and Rich (1980) reinforced the linking need: "If our major goal is to channel trained persons into jobs in gerontology in an efficient and timely manner, we need better mechanisms than currently exist for matching graduates with jobs" (p. 524).

Whether the mechanism of an aging employment clearinghouse should be nationwide or regional is an issue raised in the literature. The Center for Public Management (Note 2) report recommended, among other things, that the Administration on Aging

1. Not establish a national aging network employment clearinghouse. Rather, it should rely on expanded employment clearinghouses presently located at the Gerontological Society of America, Western Gerontological Society's Job Search, National Association of State Units on Aging and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging.

2. Consider establishing one regional employment clearinghouse to serve largely rural areas and serve as a model for any other region so interested. (p. 9)

An earlier Administration on Aging (Note 1) report pointed out that the Bureau of Labor Statistics "suggested that people tend to remain in the area that they attended college. This has been confirmed in the recent Ketron Study of the Career Preparation Program" (p. V-15) and that "the qualifications required and the conditions under which individuals are employed in organizations serving the elderly vary considerably by region, State, and locality" (p. V-15).

Another issue related to need for a linking operation has to do with supply and demand. Need for linking does not seem dependent, however, on the status of the job market; whether a buyer's or seller's market, matching jobseekers and suitable jobs might be a desirable service. The Center for Public Management (Note 2) report noted "an oversupply of qualified personnel" (p. 8) and concluded "given the oversupply, any employment clearinghouse would exacerbate current supply problems" (p. 8). The Administration on Aging (Note 1) report suggested "the possibility of the current apparent oversupply of employees changing overnight to one of low supply" (P. IV-7). Overnight changes in supply and demand have been known in other fields, such as engineering. Divergent views, to be expected in the complex economic realm, with its recurring fluctuation, are presented to give readers a fuller perspective.

These points from related literature having been presented, the discussion now turns to findings of the present study, first those pertinent to need for a job/jobseeker linking operation, then those pertinent to features and functions of such an operation.

The questionnaire item bearing directly on need and included in three of the four questionnaires yielded more favorable than unfavorable responses regarding the usefulness of a linking operation. Gerontology programs (76%) and recent employees (73%) regarded a linking operation as at least moderately useful, as did 53% of the employers.

Other items less directly but rather clearly indicated need. Recent employees would have been aided in their job seeking, they reported, by a job referral service, a job information publication, and job placement counseling. Relying mainly on "word of mouth" in their job search, many lacked information about jobs. Graduates of gerontology programs apparently received little job placement assistance aside from job vacancy notices. That most graduates were reported as finding their own jobs may mean they did so for lack of adequate assistance. While 44% of graduates were reported as "Mainly employed in aging field," only 32% were reported as having obtained suitable jobs. Again, while 67% of the recent employees reported job search duration of only 0-3 months, the jobs found so soon may not have been suitable. Also indicative of need are the substantial numbers of graduates and current students reported by gerontology programs. Similarly indicative are the substantial numbers, reported by job/jobseeker linking operations, of aging field jobseekers and job vacancies dealt with or anticipated. Linking operations also reported such linking difficulties as time required for linkages and unnecessary job requirements.

Since inadequacy of salaries cut across all four questionnaires, a word is in order about this factor, should linking operations be able to ameliorate it. As has been seen, only 12% of gerontology program graduates were reported to have obtained adequate salaries. Although 24% of the recent employees marked "Salary requirement" as a personal factor restricting their job search, only 8% indicated salary was a key reason they accepted their current jobs. "Inadequate salaries" was marked by 43% of the employers as a recruitment and hiring difficulty, by 35% of the recent employees as a factor making it difficult to find suitable employment, and by 33% of the linking operations as a factor making job/jobseeker linking difficult. In addition, 67% of the linking operations reported the most common salary range of aging field job vacancies to be below $15,000.

Some employer responses perhaps contra-indicate need. Time required for hiring, employee turnover rate, and expected job vacancies were all reported in low figures.

The turnover response is not in line with the Administration on Aging (Note 1) conclusion that turnover is "the long standing problem of employment" in the aging field. Only 5% of the employers saw lack of a job referral service as a recruitment and hiring difficulty. "Lack of qualified applicants," the difficulty chosen most frequently (45%), could conceivably be corrected by an effective linking operation.

As to the features and functions of an effective linking operation, some are suggested by the responses to several questionnaire items, others by the Center for Public Management (Note 2) report previously quoted in detail. Responses by linking operations, employees, employers, and gerontology programs all highlighted published ads or announcements. Linking operations also marked employer/seeker job mart, designated staff responsibility for aging field jobs, and radio and television. Employees also chose job referral service--an essential feature of a linking operation--and job placement counseling as aids needed in their job search. The key reasons employees accepted their jobs, finally, might well be incorporated in linking functions: relevant responsibilities, type of organization, career advancement, supervisor/co-workers, and salary. The responses cited and the Center for Public Management (Note 2) suggestions are drawn upon in the next section.

Recommendations

The findings of this study, together with findings and discussion in related literature, lead to the following tentative recommendations regarding the need for and features of aging employment clearinghouses.

1. Toward improved linking of gerontology jobs and jobseekers, aging employment clearinghouses be encouraged, supported, and assisted.

2. Toward improved geographic deployment of gerontology program graduates and others seeking gerontology jobs, regional aging employment clearinghouses be fostered, at least on an exploratory basis.

3. In keeping with the general trends of the findings in this Region IX study, a full-fledged aging employment clearinghouse be established in Region IX.

4. Toward development of a model for aging employment clearinghouses, standard operating procedures, such as those delineated on pages 8 to 9 of this report, be utilized together with procedures highlighted by the present findings, such as employer/jobseeker job marts or job fairs.

Reference Notes

1. Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. A preliminary report of the development and implementation of a federal manpower policy for the field of aging. Report to the Congress, Sept. 30, 1980.

2. Center for Public Management. Revised clearinghouse report. Discussion draft, March 16, 1981.

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SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

As mentioned in the report proper, questionnaire items related only tangentially to the study's twin objectives of need for and nature of aging employment clearinghouses are presented here. These items pertain to the characteristics of aging field employees, their backgrounds and the backgrounds sought by employers, and the curricular offerings of gerontology programs. The tabulated responses are presented with minimal comment, to allow readers to draw their own inferences.

Not presented are the responses of linking operations or clearinghouses, as the numbers of these responses were too small, largely because many clearinghouse respondents failed to answer items on the back of the questionnaire sheet, despite the encouragement of the word "over."

Table 5, on ethnicity, indicates that a majority of the employees and students were Caucasian, but that all the other designated ethnic groups were represented. Table 6 shows the modal age range for employees and students to be 31-40, with no representation of students older than 50. Table 7 shows a preponderance of female employees and students.

Table 8 shows that the Bachelor's degree was predominantly sought by employers and brought by employees, while a certificate was most commonly offered by gerontology programs.

As shown in Table 9, employers predominantly looked for 1-3 years of work experience related to aging, and recent employees predominantly brought 1-3 years of related experience.

Table 10, finally, shows that recent employees' future training plans in aging tend toward special institutes or workshops, professional conferences, and in-service training much more than toward further academic preparation.

TABLE 5

ETHNICITY OF GERONTOLOGY EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS

	Employees				Students	
	Employer responses		Employee responses		Gerontology program responses	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Black	42	36	4	8	9	36
Hispanic	51	44	6	12	10	40
Native American	15	13	2	4	4	16
Pacific/Asian	40	34	9	18	9	36
Caucasian	91	78	26	53	22	88

TABLE 6

AGE OF GERONTOLOGY EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS

	Employees				Students	
	Employer responses		Employee responses		Gerontology program responses	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
21-30*	9	8	13	27	9	36
31-40	50	43	14	29	10	40
41-50	42	36	12	24	4	16
51-60	14	12	5	10	0	0
61-70*	3	3	3	6	0	0

*In the Employee questionnaire, these options are "18-30" and "61 or over" respectively.

TABLE 7

SEX OF GERONTOLOGY EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS

	Employees				Students	
	Employer responses		Employee responses*		Gerontology program responses	
Female Percentage	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0-20	3	3			3	12
21-40	6	5			0	0
41-60	25	21			4	16
61-80	45	38			10	40
81-100	48	41			8	32

* Employees were simply asked for their sex; 27 or 55% were female.

TABLE 8

GERONTOLOGY EDUCATION SOUGHT BY EMPLOYERS, BROUGHT BY EMPLOYEES, AND OFFERED BY PROGRAMS

	Education Sought Employer responses		Education Brought Employee responses		Education Offered Gerontology program responses	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Associate degree	27	23	2	4	3	12
Bachelor's	70	60	16	33	5	20
Master's	43	37	12	24	8	32
Certificate	33	28	2	4	12	48
Other*	25	21	20	41	8	32

* Some employers looked for doctorates, some employees answered "None" to "Your specialized preparation for gerontology," and some gerontology programs offered courses rather than curricula.

TABLE 9

GERONTOLOGY WORK EXPERIENCE SOUGHT BY EMPLOYERS AND BROUGHT BY EMPLOYEES

	Work Experience Sought Employer responses		Work Experience Brought Employee responses	
	No.	%	No.	%
0- 6 months	16	14	10	20
7-11 months	16	14	6	12
1- 3 years	75	64	18	37
4- 6 years	13	11	6	12
More than 6 years	8	7	9	18

TABLE 10

EMPLOYEES' FUTURE TRAINING PLANS IN AGING

Responses of recent employees

	No.	%
Further academic preparation	15	31
In-service training	28	57
Special institutes/workshops	36	73
Professional conferences	34	69
Other	2	4

WESTERN GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The Western Gerontological Society (WGS), a non-profit, membership association, has served elders and those working with elders since 1954. It works to enhance the lives of older Americans and to contribute to their continued independence and dignity. WGS's unique contribution is its emphasis on linkage and broad, but specific, communication among diverse people in a complex, multi-disciplinary field.

For its first twenty-one years WGS conducted only an Annual Meeting, attracting several hundred West Coast professionals. The significant growth of the field between 1965 and 1975 led to a need for trained personnel, expanded and diversified communication channels, and a broader information base.

The WGS Board of Directors responded to this need, and with its selection of an Executive Director in 1975 WGS entered an important period of change. Systematically creating other programs and services, WGS met the pressing needs of personnel who were called upon to work with and for this nation's elders. The Annual Meeting now attracts close to 4,000 persons from every state.

In addition to the Annual Meeting, WGS publishes:

- *Generations*, a quarterly journal;
- *The WGS Connection*, a timely, bi-monthly newsletter;
- *WGS Job Alert*, the only nationwide monthly devoted fully to listing job opportunities for people in the field of aging.

And WGS conducts:

- Special training and applied research projects;
- A national information clearinghouse service, WGS Answers.

For the future, as the field of aging and WGS reach new levels of maturity, WGS will:

- Deepen its involvement in the application of technology to respond to elder needs at home, in the community, and in care settings;
- Develop new membership constituencies, such as those concerned with retirement issues or those involved in generic health and social services.

WGS has a "network" that is broad and deep, allowing easy access to state-of-the-art information, excellent trainers, and a wealth of other resources. The '80s promise to be a decade of strengthening and refining existing products and broadening their impact.